

Thomas Jefferson's Poplar Forest

Albemarle Chapter NSDAR Escape Route Brochure

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Track Thomas Jefferson's 1781 Escape Route from the British

A new brochure and driving tour follows Jefferson's route from Monticello to Poplar Forest

Forest, VA: On a harrowing night in June 1781, Jack Jouett raced 40 miles from his home in Louisa County to warn Thomas Jefferson that the British were coming his way. Jefferson, his wife Martha and their children narrowly escaped being captured at Monticello and headed to Poplar Forest, their remote plantation in Bedford County to hide out. A new travel brochure created by six members of the Albemarle Chapter of the National Society of the Daughters of the American Revolution (NSDAR), "Thomas Jefferson's Escape Route," traces the Jeffersons' route in one- and two-day driving tours.

Inspired by a presentation by Bill Barker of Monticello, an actor and historic interpreter who regularly portrays Thomas Jefferson, six members of the Albemarle Chapter participating in the DAR Members Course embarked on a project to research and create a map the public might use to trace the Jeffersons' journey to safety at Poplar Forest and to learn more about the historic places along the escape route.

"Our members are excited to bring this little known, but important, episode of history to life," said Charlotte Bailey, Regent of the Albemarle Chapter. "It is our hope that these short day trips will help to make our history more relevant to more people and inspire them to learn more. Kudos to the participants of our Members Course who made it their mission to create such an inspiring guide. Our thanks to the professional historians at Monticello and Poplar Forest and in the libraries, your help was invaluable."

Extensive research on the Jeffersons' movements between Monticello and Poplar Forest was drawn from Thomas Jefferson's notes and other primary sources in the Jefferson Library at Monticello, the University of Virginia, Poplar Forest and online resources. The one- and two-day driving tours invite history buffs to follow the Jeffersons' footsteps along routes that follow modern day roads and suggests stops at Jefferson-era and other interesting historic sites along the way. To ensure a positive experience on the driving tour, the DAR Members Course participants drove and tested the routes, providing the GPS settings needed to go from point-to-point.

"We were pleased to be of assistance on this interesting project and greatly appreciate the efforts of these six DAR members to shed light on this historic event," said Alyson M. Ramsey, President and CEO of Poplar Forest. "We look forward to welcoming all who venture to Poplar Forest as part of this tour. Jefferson's visit in 1781 was significant for many reasons. In addition to safeguarding his family, he wrote much of his only book, *Notes on the State of Virginia*, while he was here, and began to think about Poplar Forest as a location for a future retreat."

The "Thomas Jefferson's Escape Route" driving tour brochure will be available at Thomas Jefferson's Poplar Forest and Monticello, and at Virginia Visitor Centers.